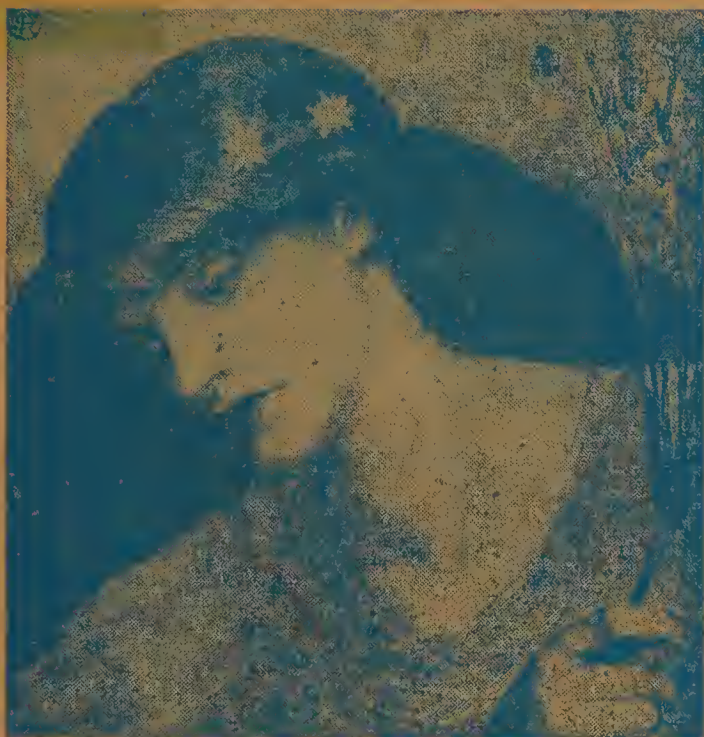


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THE BLESSED DAMOZEL



Gift of
Dawson Taylor

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE
BLESSED
DAMOZEL

by
DANTE GABRIEL
ROSSETTI



MOUNT VERNON



The page is framed by a highly ornate, symmetrical border in a light tan or gold color. The border features intricate scrollwork, floral motifs, and a central medallion-like design at the top and bottom. The background of the page is a solid, light cream or off-white color.

THE
BLESSED
DAMOZEL
LEANED
OUT

From the gold bar of Heaven :
Her eyes were deeper than the
depth
Of waters stilled at even ;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were
seven.

❧ II ❧

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to
hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her
back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

❧ III ❧

Her seemed she scarce had been
a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite
gone
From that still look of her's;
Albeit to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

❧ IV ❧

(To one it is ten years of years:
 . . . Yet now, and in this
 place,
Surely she leaned o'er me,
 —her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the Autumn-fall of
 leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

❧ V ❧

It was the rampart of God's
house
That she was standing on,—
By God built over the sheer
depth
The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking down-
ward thence,
She scarce could see the sun.

❧ VI ❧

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and
 night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this
 earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

❧ VII ❧

But in those tracts, with her, it
was
The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may
stir
Along the steady flight
Of seraphim ; no echo there,
Beyond all depth or height.

❧ VIII ❧

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among them-
selves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls, mounting up to
God,
Went by her like thin flames.

❧ IX ❧

And still she bow'd above the
 vast
Out of the circling charm ;
Until her bosom must have
 made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

❧ X ❧

From the fix'd place of Heaven,
she saw
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze
still strove,
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke, as
when
The stars sung in their spheres.

❧ XI ❧

The sun was gone now. The curl'd
Was like a little feather [moon
Fluttering far down the gulf.

And now
She spoke through the still
weather.
Her voice was like the voice the
stars
Had when they sang together.

❧ XII ❧

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that
bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When
those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach
my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

❧ XIII ❧

“I wish that he were come to
me,
For he will come,” she said.
“Have I not pray’d in Heaven?
—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray’d?
Are not two prayers a perfect
strength?
And shall I feel afraid?”

✠ XIV ✠

“When round his head the
 aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I’ll take his hand, and go with
 him
To the deep wells of light,
As unto a stream we will step
 down,
And bathe there in God’s sight.

❧ XV ❧

“We two will stand beside
that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirr’d
continually
With prayers sent up to God;
And see our old prayers,
granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

❧ XVI ❧

“We two will lie i’ the shadow
of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth
the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His
plumes touch
Saith His name audibly.

❧ XVIII ❧

“And I myself will teach to
him—
I myself, lying so,—
The songs I sing here; which
his voice
Shall pause in, hushed & slow,
And find some knowledge at
each pause
Or some new thing to know.”

ॐ XVIII ॐ

(Alas! We two, we two, thou
say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God
lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with
thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

❧ XIX ❧

“We two,” she said, “will seek
the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens,
whose names
Are five sweet symphonies:—
Cecily, Gertrude,
Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

❧ XX ❧

“Circle-wise sit they, with
 bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth, white like
 flame,
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for
 them
Who are just born, being dead.

❧ XXI ❧

“He shall fear haply, and be
dumb.

Then I will lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our
love,

Not once abashed or weak :
And the dear Mother will
approve

My pride, and let me speak.

✠ XXII ✠

“Herself shall bring us, hand in
hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged
unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And Angels, meeting us, shall
sing
To their citherns and citoles.

ॐ XXIII ॐ

“There will I ask of Christ the
Lord
Thus much for him and
me:—
Only to live as once on
earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.

❧ XXIV ❧

“Yea, verily ; when he is come
We will do thus and
thus :
Till this my vigil seem quite
strange
And almost fabulous ;
We two will live at once, one
life ;
And peace shall be with us.”

❧ XXV ❧

She gazed, and listened, and
then said,
Less sad of speech than mild;
“All this is when he comes.”
She ceased:
The light thrilled towards her,
fill’d
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

§a XXVI D3

(I saw her smile.) But soon
their path
Was vague in distant spheres;
And then she laid her arms
along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her
hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)





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